



Connecting U.P. Traffic Safety Professionals

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MICHIGAN EXCEEDS 90 PERCENT SAFETY BELT USE

The Office of Highway Safety Planning is pleased to announce Michigan is now one of six states to achieve a 90 percent or greater safety belt use rate.

According to a direct observation survey conducted by the University of Michigan Transportation Research Institute (UMTRI) during the Labor Day safety

**Michigan
has 90.5%
safety belt
usage!**

belt enforcement mobilization, safety belt use in Michigan stands at 90.5 percent.

At this rate, Michigan now boasts the sixth highest belt usage in the country, behind Arizona, California, Hawaii, Washington and Oregon.

Colonel Tadarial J. Sturdivant, director of the Michigan State Police, praised the efforts of Michigan's law enforcement officers and traffic safety supporters for reaching this milestone. He said, "Thanks to the state's primary safety belt law and the thousands of dedicated law enforcement officers at police departments across the state, Michigan has reached a level of safety once thought to be unobtainable."

Before the summer travel season, safety belt use was at approximately 84 percent. The state's rate then climbed steadily throughout the summer from nearly 87 percent at the end of May to 88.3 percent at the beginning of August.

Traffic safety officials credit expanded safety belt enforcement zones and intensive, widespread publicity efforts for the state's continued increase.

Thanks to all of you who worked so diligently to help Michigan become the sixth state to reach 90%!!! Congratulations on a job well done!

"Mocktails" in Escanaba

Sponsored by Public Health, Delta and Menominee counties

Wal-Mart • December 2 • 12-6 p.m.

Elmer's County Market • December 3 • 12-6 p.m.

Super One • December 4 • 10 a.m.-4 p.m.

Mocktails served by law enforcement, MADD, SADD, and other groups • Red ribbon distribution

Contact Ruth Botbyl at (906) 789-8104

SAFE Holidays Event

Marquette • Friday, December 10

Westwood Mall • 11 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Enjoy "mocktails" served by
area law enforcement officers

View the MADD display memorializing
Upper Peninsula victims of drunk driving

Contact Sue Girard-Jackson at (906) 225-8473

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WELCOME

The winter is upon us. It seems as though we just get into the groove of warm weather living and it's time to bundle up and hibernate once again.

There are important events on tap during the next few months that we want to call to your attention. Safe holiday programs are held annually (see page one) to draw attention to the importance of drinking wisely around Christmas and New Year's and being a responsible host. Be sure to attend and sample some great non-alcoholic drink recipes and to get a red ribbon for your car!

The Upper Peninsula Planning Meeting is being held on February 17 from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. at Northern Michigan University. This event is sponsored by AAA Michigan and the Michigan Office of Highway Safety Planning.

Your participation in this meeting is vital because it helps us create highway safety programs that are innovative and successful. We will be presenting data from across the region, looking at types and causes of crashes, and discussing priority areas. This is not merely a "talking head" program. We need your input, ideas and suggestions.

Many of our readers have come to us later in the year to suggest a project that they were interested in doing and we have had to decline because we had already appropriated the funding or come up with a strategic plan. OHSP spends time evaluating data and talking to our partners from January through March. Strategies are due in April and grant writing begins in June. Grants are generally based on innovative countermeasures for crashes that show a trend. Crash data for your review is available on the web. Call us for the address and for more information.

Have a safe holiday season and stay warm!

Sincerely,
Jamie Dolan, Regional Coordinator and
Lea Casper, Assistant Regional Coordinator

Mark Your Calendar!

**U.P. Planning Meeting/TSC Meeting
February 17, 2005**

10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

**Northern Michigan University
Don Bottum University Center
Buffet lunch included**

Watch the mail for announcements

THE WORK ZONE

CINDY BOYER

Marquette County Victim Witness Coordinator

If someone is caught drinking and driving in Marquette County, he or she can expect to face the Marquette County Drunk Driving Impact Panel. A typical panel includes a law enforcement officer, an emergency medical technician, and two victims whose lives have been affected by a drunk driver. It is impossible to remain unmoved as panelists relate life-altering tragedies.

The victim impact panel was created by Marquette County Prosecutor Gary Walker, and by district judges who wanted to make an impact on alcohol related crashes in the community. The task fell to Cindy Boyer, Marquette County victim witness coordinator, and Mary Mantyla, district court probation officer, who tackled the project with enthusiasm. Boyer organizes the quarterly panels held on Monday nights in Marquette, where typical attendance ranges between 20 and 45 people.

"The goal of the panel is to raise awareness of the harm and hurt that drinking and driving can have on both the driver and others," says Boyer. Does the panel succeed in its mission? Although no data is kept on recidivism rates, Boyer reports that evaluations of the panels are generally positive. It is not unusual to hear people say, "I never looked at this through the victim's eyes before. I've learned a lot tonight."

Boyer believes that more serious penalties have been the greatest deterrent to drinking and driving. What else can be done? "More education, penalties, and costs. More creativity in how people fill their time-off." She is pleased to see programs in schools in which drinking is discouraged. For example, Boyer mentioned a trend in which schools are requiring students to pass a portable breath test to gain entry into dances and events. "While professionals can help to curtail youth drinking," she says, "education really begins in the home."

Ultimately, the problem of drinking and driving must be addressed with a multi-disciplined line of attack, and the victim impact panel takes a hard-hitting and emotional approach about the dangers and costs associated with the decision to drink and get behind the wheel of a car.

Victim Impact Panel Seeks Volunteers

While the victim impact panel currently has very effective volunteers, Boyer continues to solicit new panelists who have been impacted by drunk driving including law enforcement officers, emergency medical personnel, and crash victims. "We have an excellent panel," Boyer said, but she would also like to add to the pool of volunteers so panelists can rotate and take a break from reliving difficult experiences.

To volunteer for the victim impact panel, or for more information, contact Cindy Boyer at (906) 225-8315.

Meet Jack Olson

AARP Drive Safety Program

A few questions for drivers over the age of 50. Do you feel you could use an update on traffic "rules of the road?" Could your driving skills be sharpened? Have you noticed a change in your eyesight, hearing and reaction time? If so, Jack Olson, Upper Peninsula Assistant State Coordinator for the American Association of Retired Persons (AARP) Driver Safety Program, is just a phone call away.

Recognizing the need to help older drivers improve their driving skills and prevent traffic crashes, the AARP Driver Safety Program was created for motorists age 50 and older. The eight-hour classroom refresher (formerly known as 55 Alive) was the first program of its kind and is now the largest nation-wide comprehensive curriculum designed especially for the older motorist. Graduates to date exceed nine million.

The course is comprised of two four-hour sessions, and covers topics such as physical changes after age 50, intersection safety, trouble spots such as backing up and managing shopping center parking lots, freeway driving, and how to deal with aggressive drivers. Other topics include traffic signs and signals, knowing your vehicle, school bus safety, three-second following distance, protecting yourself in a crash, and driver retirement.

Olson and seven other instructors provide classes throughout the region at a cost of \$10. Olson enjoys teaching the course and his enthusiasm is evident. "The real high point is when I finish a class and see that it has made a difference," he said.

Studies indicate that eight out of every ten drivers report changing up to three driving habits after taking the course.

Don Balmer, a Driver Safety Program instructor for the Marquette area, believes that taking the class is an excellent way for "people to keep both themselves and others safe." Balmer has served as an instructor for the Marquette Senior High School driver education program for 30 years and has been teaching senior courses for over five years.

For information about the AARP Driver Program contact Jack Olson in Newberry at (906) 293-8467 or AARP toll-free at (888) 227-7669. Marquette residents may also contact Don Balmer at (906) 249-1273.



American Association of Retired Persons Driver Program instructor Don Balmer (left) pictured with Jack Olson, AARP Driver Safety Program assistant state coordinator

SPONSOR AN AARP DRIVER PROGRAM

Sponsors are a vital part of the American Association of Retired Persons Driver Program. The program has received generous support from many sponsors including the Northern Center for Lifelong Learning and Helen Newberry Joy Hospital. Classes are typically held at churches, senior centers, hospitals, and municipal buildings.

How can you help? The most important contribution is providing a place to meet with tables and chairs, and a VCR. Sponsors can assist with promotion by displaying posters and brochures, placing articles in newsletters, and mentioning the course to community groups. They may also assist with reservations, provide light refreshments, and even subsidize the course fee.

To sponsor a class, contact Jack Olson, 407 East Truman Blvd., Newberry, MI 49868, (906) 293-8467 or jac_una_olson@hotmail.com

Name This Traffic Safety Professional and Win a Click It or Ticket T-Shirt!



This Upper Peninsula police chief has been with the same department for 27 years and has served as chief for the past 18 years. His two grown daughters were both valedictorians in high school and are now attending private college (the chief readily admits that they take after their mother). One of his officers was named the Fraternal Order of Police Officer of the Year in 2004. Another clue... June is a busy month for this chief. Who is he? Call OHSP at (906) 225-7030, ext. 240 or e-mail casperl@michigan.gov and be entered in the drawing for a t-shirt, pen light, and other assorted traffic goodies.

Congratulations to St. Ignace Police Department's Lori Strict who was last quarter's winner of "Name this Traffic Safety Professional." She correctly identified the ballerina as OHSP's own Lea Casper. Strict's name was randomly drawn from all the readers who guessed correctly.



First Lieutenant Larry Gasperich receives an "I Made the Connection" award from Lea Casper of the Office of Highway Safety Planning.



Stephenson Post Commander Encourages Use of Motorcycle Safety Equipment

A motorcycle ride on a beautiful September morning turned into a harrowing experience for First Lieutenant Larry Gasperich as a deer struck his vehicle as he traveled to work. Gasperich, commander of the Michigan State Police Stephenson Post, was thrown from his motorcycle and skidded along the pavement, suffering a separated shoulder, bruised ribs, and muscle strains. Fortunately, he wore complete safety gear that undoubtedly prevented more serious if not fatal injuries.

Following the incident, the Office of Highway

Safety Planning presented Gasperich with the *I Made the Connection* award in recognition of his use of safety equipment, particularly his helmet. The award was presented at the September 27 Traffic Safety Committee Meeting where Gasperich displayed his helmet and gear, damaged from the crash.

Gasperich never rides his bike without wearing a helmet and riding gear, including jacket, chaps, gloves, boots, and goggles and advises others to do the same. "The benefit of wearing protective gear when riding should be obvious. It enhances riding comfort by reducing exposure to the elements, road debris, flying insects, and more. It also reduces the risk of injury. How much riding gear to wear is a personal choice, but to me,

more is better, cowhide saves your hide." Gasperich also reminds motorcyclists that wearing a helmet is the law.

Do you know someone who was saved by safety equipment? If so, contact Lea Casper at OHSP at (906) 225-7030 for an *I Made the Connection* Award nomination form.

Legislators and Candidates Discuss Traffic Safety Issues

The Upper Peninsula Traffic Safety Committee (TSC) held a Legislative Forum on traffic safety issues on September 27. Panelists at the meeting included Rep. Tom Casperson, David Kaltenbach, Steve Lindberg (representing Rep. Stephen Adamini), and Travis Peterson. All candidates and legislators were supplied with questions prior to the meeting on topics such as the proposed motorcycle helmet repeal, Andy's Law, booster seat legislation, and teen driving issues. Rep. Rich Brown and Sen. Jason Allen, who were unable to attend the meeting, responded to the questions in writing. The questions sparked debate among panelists about the balance of safety and reduced fatalities versus personal freedom. The meeting also allowed TSC members to advocate for booster seat legislation and to voice concern over the proposed helmet repeal. As always, the legislative meeting was a great opportunity to dialogue about traffic safety issues in the Upper Peninsula.

The next U.P. TSC meeting is February 17, at Northern Michigan University and will serve as a collaborative traffic safety planning meeting hosted by OHSP and AAA Michigan. Please plan to attend this meeting from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. and help create solutions to Upper Peninsula traffic safety issues. Call Jamie Dolan for details at (906) 225-7036.

UPPER PENINSULA PARTNERSHIPS FOR SAFETY RECEIVES NATIONAL CHAPTER AWARD

The Upper Peninsula Partnerships for Safety (UPPS) is the recipient of the *ThinkFirst* National Injury Prevention Foundation's Chapter of the Year Award. The goal of *ThinkFirst* is to prevent traumatic injuries among young people by teaching them to "think first and use their minds to protect their bodies." UPPS has provided these programs in Marquette County since 1996 and has expanded to Alger, Schoolcraft, Houghton, Iron, Baraga, and Keweenaw counties. More than 3,500 individuals have heard the *ThinkFirst* message in the past two years.

UPPS is a non-profit organization dedicated to reducing the occurrence of "preventable" traumatic injuries by way of education and personal empowerment. UPPS collaborates with existing agencies and is affiliated with *ThinkFirst* for Kids, *ThinkFirst* for Teens, SAFE KIDS, and Camp 911. In addition to educational programs, UPPS in cooperation with SAFE KIDS and local community organizations has fitted and distributed 2,738 bicycle helmets in the last four years.

Adult helmet usage was the focus of this summer's *ThinkFirst* campaign. "Many times we see adults and kids biking together. The kids are wearing helmets, but not the adults," says Karen Teichman, UPPS executive director.

Bike helmets are approximately 88 percent effective in preventing head injuries, yet only 18 percent wear bike helmets. "We don't know when a bike crash will occur, so think first, buckle your brain, and wear safety equipment to prevent unintentional injuries," says Teichman.

To learn more about *ThinkFirst* programs, contact Karen Teichman at UPPS, UPPSafety@aol.com or (906) 228-3038.

MICHIGAN NETS PROVIDES WINTER DRIVING SAFETY TIPS

Winter driving season has arrived. It's amazing how many motorists have forgotten their winter driving skills during the short summer months. Although there are almost as many opinions as to how to drive safely on ice and snow as there are automobiles, the fact is most crashes occur when motorists don't expect the surface of the road to be slippery.

Many people get into trouble by assuming the roads will not be slippery unless the temperature is freezing or below. Ice can form on road surfaces any time the air temperature drops to 40 degrees or less, especially when it is windy. Bridges and underpasses can be especially hazardous, but these are not the only locations "black ice" can form. Any low or shaded area, area surrounded by landscaping, or area that has a source of water running over the pavement can also be quick to form ice. Early morning hours are especially dangerous, as the moisture has had an opportunity to sit on the cold pavement and freeze.

Others find themselves in trouble when trying to stop at intersections that appear to be clear or only slightly wet, only to discover that it is ice-covered and slippery. This is caused by moisture emitting from the exhaust of cars waiting at the intersection which then quickly freezes on the pavement.

It is also recommended that motorists allow no less than a car-length in front of their vehicle when stopped behind other vehicles at intersections. They should also watch their rear-view mirrors for cars approaching too fast from behind. Often this extra margin of safety will allow drivers to pull forward in the event that an approaching vehicle begins to slide.

If you do find yourself beginning to slide on snow or ice, DON'T PANIC. Take your foot off the gas and DO NOT hit the brakes. Steer the front of your vehicle into the skid (the same direction you are sliding). This technique

is used in both front- and rear-wheel-drive vehicles. If you must use the brakes, do not allow them to lock up. In cars not equipped with anti-lock brakes (ABS), gently pump the brake pedal. In ABS-equipped vehicles, use a firm, steady pressure WITHOUT pumping. The grinding noise and surging felt in the pedal is normal and indicates the brakes are working properly, allowing for controlled steering. Four-wheel-drive enthusiasts are reminded that although a four-wheel-drive vehicle provides additional traction that is useful for going through deep snow, four-wheel drive vehicles do not stop any faster.

Some other basic safety tips for winter driving include:

- Allow extra time to arrive at your destination
- Slow down and be alert for other vehicles around you that may lose control
- Allow at least four seconds between vehicles.

Being prepared

Just as important as good driving skills, however, is preventative maintenance.

Motorists need to make sure their vehicle is in good mechanical condition as temperature extremes always bring out the worst in vehicles.

- Make sure antifreeze is at the proper level
- Install new wiper blades and fill the washer reservoir
- Keep an extra bottle of washer solvent in the vehicle
- Make sure battery terminals are clean and if the battery is more than three year's old, have it tested by a qualified technician
- Check the treads on the tires, or have a technician at a tire dealer check them.

Prepare an emergency kit for your car. Include things that prepare you for the

unexpected — what would you need if you found yourself stranded miles from help during a snowstorm?

Items to include are:

- Warm clothing, boots, stocking cap, gloves or mittens
- Flashlight with fresh batteries and flares
- Small shovel, sand or kitty litter
- Blankets, and fresh first-aid supplies
- Candy bars or other nutritious snacks
- Small candles and matches to light them with. A single lit candle can provide warmth for four hours.

Don't forget the cure for a frozen lock. Carefully heating the end of a key with a match or a lighter will work most of the time. A squirt of de-icer spray that you can purchase at most gas stations and store it in your glove box is another quick method.

During inclement weather make sure to let others know your route of travel, and expected arrival time. Cell phones are a great safety insurance against breakdowns and getting stranded—but they do little good if you don't know where you are! Stay alert, and know precisely where you are at all times in the event you need to call for help. Watch for road signs and landmarks.

Also, never ever start a vehicle in a closed garage or idle your engine with the windows closed. Carbon monoxide, which is present in exhaust fumes, is almost impossible to detect and can be fatal. Remember to always keep fresh air moving.

UPCOMING MOBILIZATION


**You Drink & Drive.
YOU LOSE**

Dec. 20–Jan. 2

**U.P. Regional Office
MI Office of Highway Safety Planning
1504 W. Washington St., Ste. A
Marquette, MI 49855**

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FIRST CLASS MAIL
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U.P. Child Passenger Safety Project Funded by OHSP

Child Passenger Safety (CPS) programming in the Upper Peninsula is getting a major boost from the Office of Highway Safety Planning (OHSP) for the upcoming year. OHSP has awarded \$100,000 to the Marquette County Sheriff's Office (MCSO) to strengthen child passenger safety.

MCSO Community Safety Coordinator Sue Girard-Jackson will serve as project director and Diane Curry of the Marquette County Health Department will act as project assistant.

Activities and goals for the project include:

- Establishing permanent child safety seat fitting stations
- Working with hospitals to increase education and establish discharge policies for infants
- Providing technical assistance and updated information to CPS technicians



Dianne Curry and Sue Girard-Jackson at a child passenger safety seat check

- Offering two new technician classes in the Upper Peninsula
- Offering two refresher/update classes for current technicians
- Increasing educational efforts—including a program for senior citizens
- Supporting the newly formed Upper Peninsula CPS Coalition.

CPS COALITION UPDATE

The Upper Peninsula Child Passenger Safety (CPS) Coalition, formed in August 2004, continues to focus on strategic planning. Recent topics of discussion have included:

- Methods to improve community education and outreach through media
- Creation of a traveling CPS display
- Development of a system to recognize outstanding CPS/injury prevention advocates in the Upper Peninsula
- Collaborating with the Upper Peninsula Traffic Safety Committee to provide up-to-date information on the status of CPS in the region.

The Upper Peninsula CPS coalition is actively seeking membership from all individuals and agencies with an interest in improved child passenger safety in the region.